

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 20, 2014

The Honorable Carolyn Colvin  
Acting Commissioner, Social Security Administration  
6401 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Acting Commissioner Colvin:

As you know, our Social Security system provides financial stability for individuals and families at retirement, the onset of a disability, or the loss of a spouse or parent. Social Security is also important in our constituents' daily lives, which is why we want to make sure field offices are available and accessible to meet their needs. At the same time those field offices must provide all necessary services, which is why we are concerned with the decision to discontinue in-person access to benefit verification statements and eliminate Numi-lites. We strongly urge you to reconsider and find solutions that protect the Americans who rely on you for help.

Last year, 11 million people used field offices to request copies of Social Security Numbers (Numi-lites) and/or benefit verification statements from SSA offices, where they can be printed out immediately. Beginning in August, with respect to Numi-lites, and October, with respect to benefit verification statements, these valuable services will be discontinued. Americans will no longer be able to walk into field offices to request these documents, but instead, will have to apply online or by phone for benefit verifications or apply for a Social Security card, adding 7 to 10 days to wait times. While SSA has indicated that an exception policy will address dire situations, we are concerned this will be burdensome to administer and that many people with urgent needs will be left out.

Middle class Americans have regular need for the benefit verification statement for tax purposes, car loans, mortgages, or rental agreements. Additionally, these forms are used in applying for low income benefits, housing, or workforce programs. And unemployed job seekers may need proof of their Social Security numbers quickly, without having to wait for a Social Security card to arrive in the mail, to make sure that they don't miss out on jobs when potential employers are moving quickly.

The SSA's plan to have people access their benefit verification statements over the phone or online, is likely to exacerbate access issues for the most vulnerable. The call centers are not equipped to handle the new demand. Callers in March experienced a 26 minute average wait

time as compared to 9 minutes a year ago. The busy rate is up 20 percent over last year and staffing at the call centers is down to its lowest point since they were established. And this is before millions of new calls for the benefit verification form.

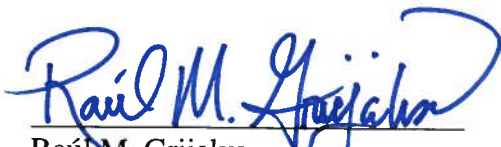
Transitioning to online forms will present a very difficult challenge particularly for the millions of Americans who lack computers, printers and computer expertise. Moreover, never before have Americans been required to use SSA's online services. This will mark a first, and it is not clear that the system is capable of handling this new volume of online usage.


We urge you to continue providing vital services through a robust network of SSA field offices. Limiting access to these forms without understanding the effects on Americans could result in unintended consequences for our constituents. We understand SSA has suffered budget cuts, however discontinuing these services is likely to increase rather than decrease cost at the expense of millions of beneficiaries who need, want and have paid for these services. While Numi-lites cost mere pennies to generate, the alternative -- a Social Security card -- will cost SSA about \$25 to print, not including mailing costs. Until an affordable alternative is found, the failure to provide Numi-lites will cause delays and increased costs. SSA would also need to add a large number of call center staff to respond to the large increase in call volume, further increasing costs.

It is critical that the Social Security Administration reverse its decision to discontinue in-person access to benefit verification statements. We also want to work with you to find a solution to the over-reliance on Numi-lites and delays in being able to receive new or replacement Social Security cards.

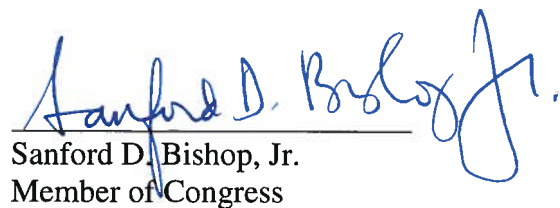
We hope you will take seriously the concerns of the undersigned Members.

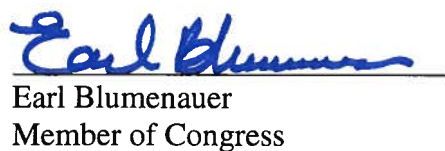
Sincerely,

  
Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

  
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

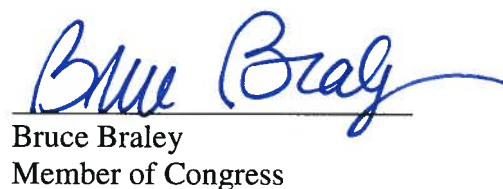
  
Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

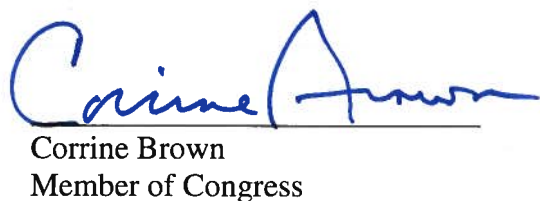
  
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress

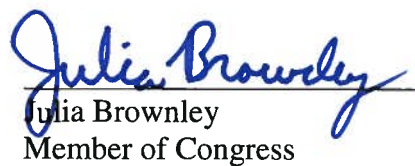
  
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

  
Madeleine Z. Bordallo  
Member of Congress

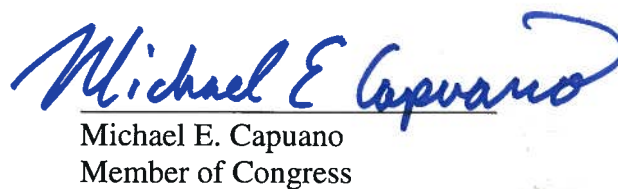
  
Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress

  
Bruce Braley  
Member of Congress

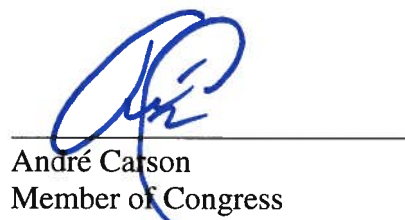
  
Corrine Brown  
Member of Congress

  
Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

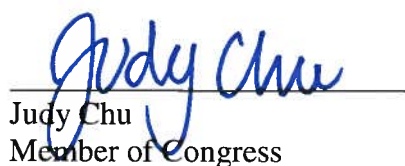
  
Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress

  
Michael E. Capuano  
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Tony Cardenas  
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André Carson  
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Matt Cartwright  
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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



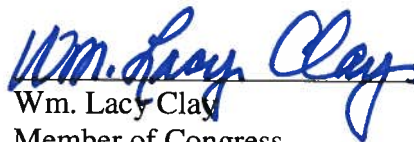
David Cicilline  
Member of Congress



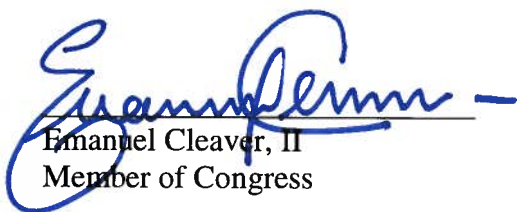
Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress



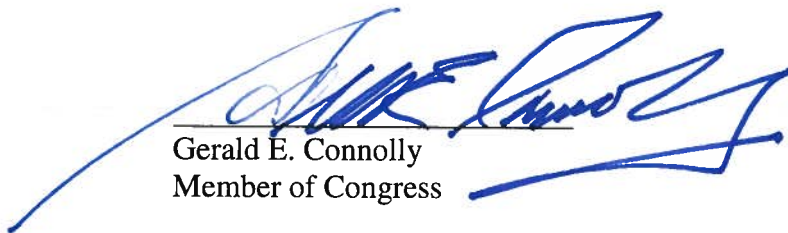
Yvette Clarke  
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Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress



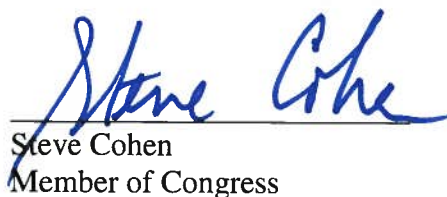
Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



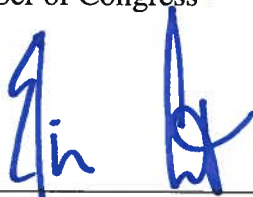
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



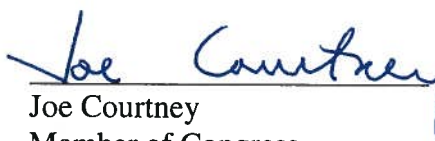
John Conyers  
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Jim Costa  
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Joe Courtney  
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Elijah E. Cummings  
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Danny K. Davis  
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Susan A. Davis  
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Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress





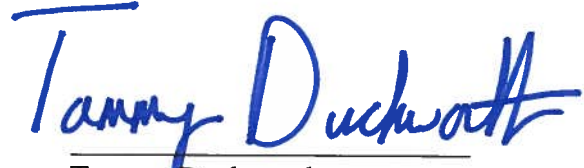
Diana DeGette  
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Suzan DelBene  
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Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress



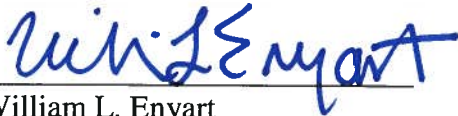
Tammy Duckworth  
Member of Congress



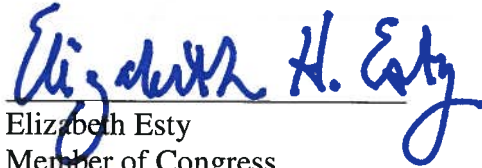
Donna F. Edwards  
Member of Congress



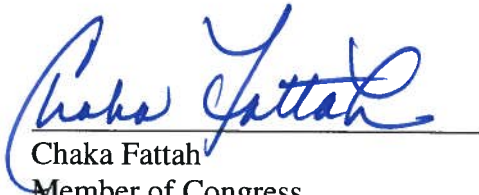
Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



William L. Enyart  
Member of Congress



Elizabeth Esty  
Member of Congress



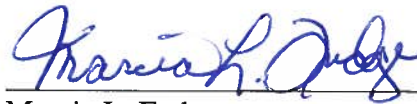
Chaka Fattah  
Member of Congress



Sam Farr  
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Lois Frankel  
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Marcia L. Fudge  
Member of Congress



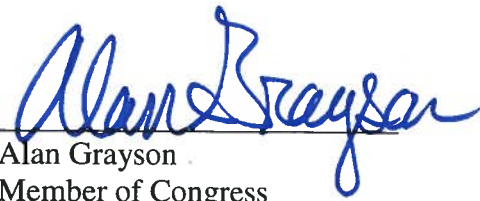
Pete Gallego  
Member of Congress



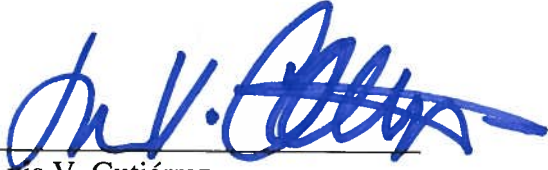
Joe Garcia  
Member of Congress



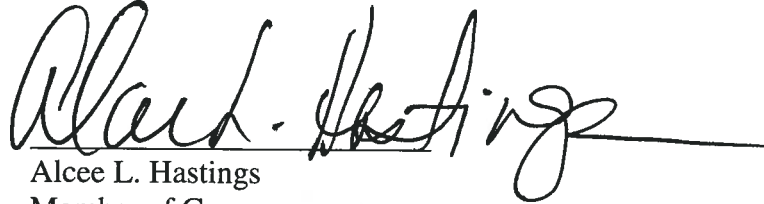
Gene Green  
Member of Congress



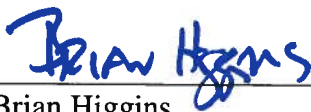
Alan Grayson  
Member of Congress



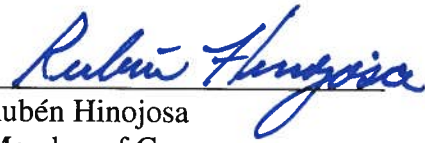
Luis V. Gutiérrez  
Member of Congress



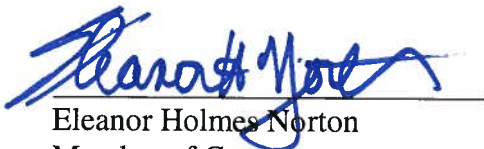
Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress



Rubén Hinojosa  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Rush Holt  
Member of Congress



Michael M. Honda  
Member of Congress



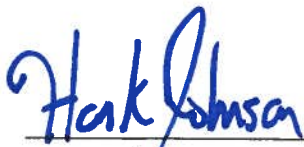
Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



Hakeem Jeffries  
Member of Congress










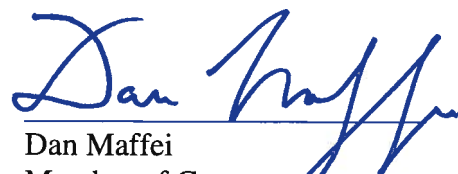
Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

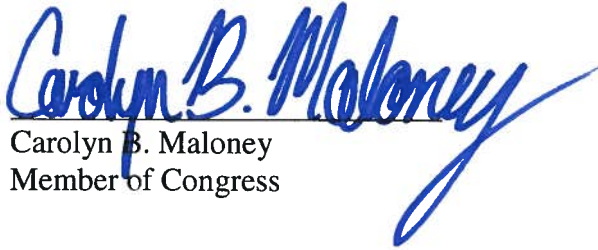


Hank Johnson  
Member of Congress

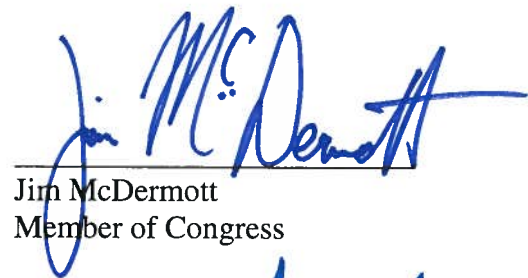


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William Keating  
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Gregory W. Meeks  
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Grace Meng  
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Gwen Moore  
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Jim Moran  
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Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



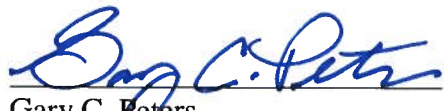
Grace J. Napolitano  
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Beto O'Rourke  
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Ed Pastor  
Member of Congress



Gary C. Peters  
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Scott Peters  
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Collin C. Peterson  
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Pedro R. Pierluisi  
Member of Congress



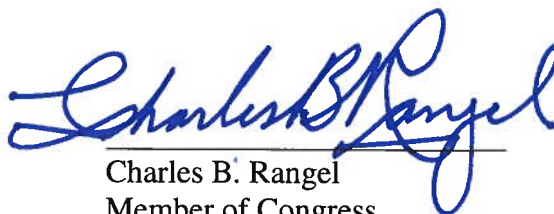
Chellie Pingree  
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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



Jared Polis  
Member of Congress



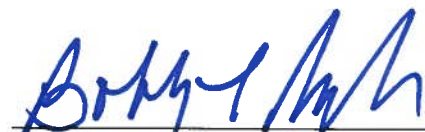
Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress



Cedric Richmond  
Member of Congress



Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress



Bobby Rush  
Member of Congress




Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan  
Member of Congress



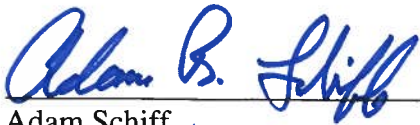
Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



Loretta Sanchez  
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress



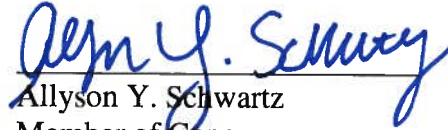
Adam Schiff  
Member of Congress



Brad Schneider  
Member of Congress



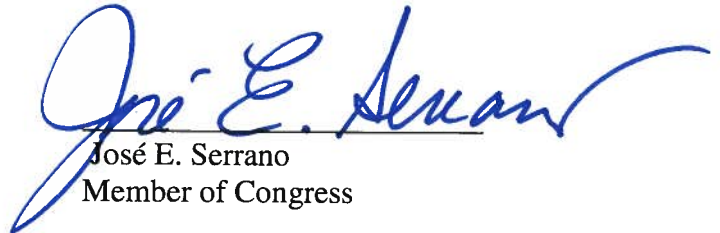
Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress



Allyson Y. Schwartz  
Member of Congress



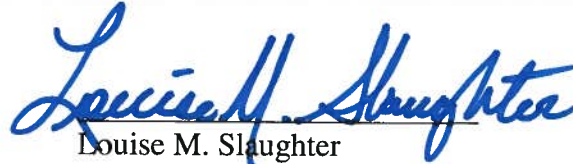
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



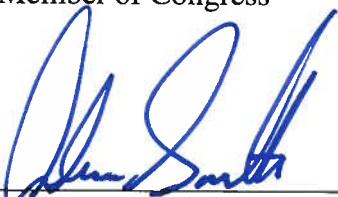
José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



Terri Sewell  
Member of Congress



Louise M. Slaughter  
Member of Congress



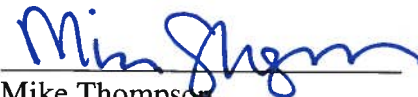
Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



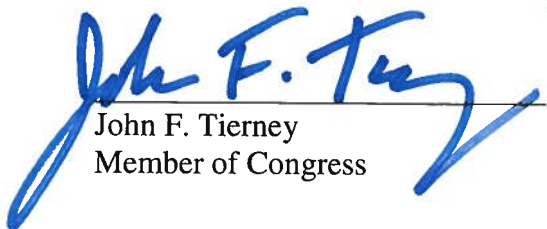
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



Mark Takano  
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Mike Thompson  
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John F. Tierney  
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Paul D. Tonko  
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